

The Mystery of Incarnation (3 of 9)

by Art Katz

The sermon explores the profound implications of the incarnation of Christ, emphasizing its significance for Christians today and the call to embody this mystery in our lives.

Duration: 58:43

Scripture: Matthew 9:1-8, John 1:1-14, John 13:34-35, Acts 2:14-41, Ephesians 4:1-6, Philippians 2:5-11, Colossians 1:15-20

Topics: "Incarnation"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the significance of the incarnation of Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of God's cosmic design. He highlights that the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom to all nations and the inclusion of the Gentiles are essential for the coming of the deliverer. The preacher also discusses the unity and uniqueness of believers in the church, emphasizing that God invests himself in the individuality of each person. Lastly, he questions the lack of the same power and authority seen in the early church in modern-day Pentecostal churches.

Transcript

But they are the questions that pertain to the subject of the mystery of incarnation. So, when we consider these questions together, you'll have a framework of what it is that we're going to be considering in this final week. You can begin to probe and examine yourself.

Instead of printing it out, I felt to just rehearse them with you. You can write them and make your own list. So, this is just the basic first examination on the great subject of incarnation.

So, Lord, your blessing again, we pray. It's a holy subject and it's sort of the consummation of the atonement. We're saved from sin, but saved unto something.

And it's that unto that we want to consider, my God, for which creation is groaning, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. So, bless us, my God, from the first day of this final week, because you know how we look to you as the great Alpha and Omega. You begin and you conclude.

So, give us a beginning for the conclusion and all that you want to invest in us and set into our thought and into our consideration that we will take from this place and walk out of the places from which we've come and where you're yet to bring us. So, we thank you, Lord, for a holy subject, still a controversy in many sectors of the church. Come and give us, my God, your illumination, your perception.

We thank you and give you praise for the privilege of even considering this so great subject together. In Jesus' name, amen. So, first question.

What are the implications for us as Christians today of the incarnation of Christ, God in the flesh? What are the implications for us as Christians today of the incarnation of Christ, God in the flesh? Of necessity, God had to be in the flesh, or there could not have been an atonement. It required a man who would suffer and die, but who had also to be more than man, because a man, however virtuous and estimable, can never satisfy the requirement of God's justice for sin. Only God himself.

So, God is faced with the difficulty of providing a sacrifice that his own justice demands, that is greater than calves and bulls, that no man himself could ever provide, and yet must be experienced by a man for a man. And that man is Christ Jesus. So, we have of necessity for the atonement, God in the flesh.

And the New Testament writers speak about those days as the days of his flesh. And this is unprecedented in the history of faith, that God would invest himself in man, that there would be some strange union between deity and humanity that is totally unprecedented. And the theologians have been breaking their heads over it from the earliest centuries of church history because it gave rise to such speculation as would bring about deception and heresy threatening the church itself.

Because one school could not believe that God could be crucified. And therefore, their tendency was to depreciate the divinity part. Another school called Ebionites could not believe that man could be united with deity and sought to find a way to depreciate Jesus as a man.

And so, these were heresies that threatened the faith. And the church had to summon the ability to meet these dangerous threats by church councils. So, in the 4th and 5th century, you have six church councils.

One of them is the Council of Nicaea. They take their name from their location. About the deity, the issue of deity and humanity.

And it brought some resolution, but it raised new questions. So, then there was a subsequent, the Council of Chalcedon. You don't have to know all this, though it's interesting in itself as church history.

And they wrestled with the great questions. And out of that second council came a statement. I'll be able to read it to you somewhere here.

That Jesus is both man and God. Two persons of the same substance. And there's a Greek word for substance, and even the word persons was something that the Greek mind in that generation was able to conceive as answering the issue.

But how there could be a union between the two persons could only be answered that they were the same substance, they were deity, they were God. So, that has more or less been the prevailing theological foundation for understanding the mystery of God in the flesh. Two persons united, but of equal substance with God.

And that's why Jesus could be acknowledged as Lord, because his own testimony and the witness of the early church recognized his Lordship. And if he's Lord, he's also therefore God. So, how God himself could be manifest in flesh with man seems to be itself heretical.

And of course, Jews to this day have been offended by that premise. How could a holy God be joined with man? It seems to be an apparent contradiction, but it's a mystery. So, I'm raising the question, what are the implications? Yes, it has served the purpose of providing atonement that required the death of a man who's also God.

But what, beside rendering that service, what's the implication for us of the issue of deity and humanity somehow united together? Is there an implication for us? Are we a continuation of that mystery? Is God in us, in our flesh? Why do we say, Christ in us, the hope of glory? Why does Paul keep talking about in him, in him, in him, I live and move and have my being. For me to live is Christ. As a man reiterating the mystery as it pertains to himself.

So, it's not just that Jesus set something forth, but set something forth in which the church is to continue. And if it required the union of deity and humanity to serve the purposes of atonement, what is required to serve the purposes of God's glory? And how does that work? How did it work for him? What of his decisions and his conduct issued from his deity and what of his conduct issued out of his humanity? And is there any way really to tell? Could it be that even his miracles did not issue out of some omnipotence that he brought with him as God, but out of a faith and a union with the Father by faith through prayer and devotion? See, these are remarkable questions because if he acted in power only out of his deity, then we cannot hope to emulate him and that we're not God. But if he acted out of his humanity by faith, then there are implications for us.

And maybe even the other way too. In what degree is God in us as the hope of glory? And to what degree can that God in us be appropriated and give an opportunity to express himself through our flesh as he expressed himself through the flesh of Jesus? So this is what we're going to consider in these great questions. It's not just an abstract theological or doctrinal consideration.

The implications are astonishing and the Church has not rightly even begun to consider what this mystery of incarnation means for us. How can we ourselves continue in it or be in the expression of it? And if we're not conscious of that mystery and ourselves in a privileged place to express it, how shall we? So what was demonstrated or affected by that act the union of dignity and humanity beyond the necessity of being a man to suffer and die so as to obtain for us atonement?

What's demonstrated by this Jesus who is man of man supremely man and supremely God in the necessity to provide the atonement but what more is provided by that reality that needs to be considered? I'm just taking the first question and kind of restating it. What are the implications of the union of dignity and humanity in Christ beyond the necessity of being a man to suffer and die for our atonement that we need to consider?

We need to read the prologue to John whom our hands have handled and seen and known the word of life that was from the beginning that the word was with God the word is God this is a remarkable introduction to the fourth gospel which I'm assuming that you know is different from the other three the first three, Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called synoptic because they all rehearse the basic history and life and teachings of Jesus but the gospel of John is separated from the other three making a statement an altogether more radical kind than the first three gospels and beginning with the prologue itself that you can stupefy and choke and splutter over in the beginning was the word and the word was made flesh and taught among us and we beheld this word we handled the word of life so that the

creator is also now a creature but he was from the beginning and was with us and we saw and handled these are staggering statements and at the height of offense of course to the Jew which is to say also the modern world so we need to probe those statements and their implication for us what was demonstrated or affected by that act the union of deity and humanity beyond the necessity of being a man to suffer and die so as to attain for us atonement what else was demonstrated beyond that necessity that we need to consider because if we just consider that this was an expedient necessity for atonement and that we ended there we missed the greater glory it was great in itself there would be no atonement except a man was crucified suffered and died only a man can die and yet the man had to be

God or the sacrifice would not have been sufficient you see the conundrum that the father is faced with that is answered by the sending of his son I'm asking what more is revealed or are we to consider beyond the necessity for atonement that comes with God in man God in the flesh what more is there what did Christ exemplify or demonstrate in his obedience to the father in the days of his flesh that instructs us about sonship here we have opportunity to see a son of man in relationship to the father in the school of obedience by faith who is impeccable in his obedience and is considered the pattern son so will we know anything about sonship or what it is that God is wanting us to attain to except that we review in him what a son of God is in the flesh in the earth in all that is contrary

to the flesh and opposed that Jesus demonstrated in his own walk and that we are also required to know and to express what did Christ exemplify or demonstrate in his obedience to the father in the days of his flesh that instructs us about sonship he was always the son the pre-incarnate son but the issue of sonship is demonstrated by his conduct and obedience in the flesh which cost him and it will cost us did he have the advantage of deity omniscience and omnipotence did he have a being God as well as man did he have a power of God and a knowledge that God has that gave him an advantage in his days of flesh that is not available to us how is it he could say that he doesn't know the day that the father has not told him does that indicate that he himself does not function in the faculty of

deity that is omniscient and all-knowing what does Philippians chapter 2 tell us that he lay aside what did he lay aside and forsake and give up how did he empty himself and take upon himself the form of man and even that of a servant even unto death the death of the cross this is the nub of the controversy if you want to know the Greek word it's kenosis k-e-n-o-s-i-s means emptying and there's a school of theologians that subscribe to a complete kenosis that the genius of Jesus is the emptying of himself therefore all that he performed spoke and did was not out of the power of deity that's exactly what he lay aside what he did issued out of his humanity on the same basis by which we're called to walk namely by faith and in relationship with the father that he had no advantage by virtue

of deity than what is available to us this is exactly what he lay aside others say who are not friendly to this view and I'll be reading to you from different theologians God cannot separate himself from God impossible he might forsake certain advantages but he could never God cannot divorce himself from God so that Jesus and the flesh cannot be understood except you factor in also that there's a resident deity in his life and ministry I'm going to read to you from P.T.

Forsyth that is a recent discovery who says it took the power of God for Jesus to empty himself of deity it's a remarkable statement that mere man could not have vacated this remarkable reality it took the power of God to forsake God and that Jesus was willing and exercised that in order to walk as man so what does he reveal that will instruct us now what sonship means did he have the advantage of deity omnipotence, omniscience as an enablement not available to us how then is he to be considered the patterned son if he

had advantages not available to us how is he the pattern he's only one that we can admire but not one that we can emulate what can we hope to become other than a pale reflection of what Jesus himself exemplified and performed in his earthly life in what way is it possible

to us to perpetuate let alone fulfill the mystery of incarnation if he had advantages not available to us how can we be called to fulfill the same mystery in the church Christ in us the hope of glory how does Paul the apostolic man exemplify this mystery because that last quotation is Paul's Christ in us the hope of glory it's Paul who says that in him he lives and moves and has his being for him to live is Christ if any man seems to have laid hold of this mystery of incarnation and expressed it consistently it's Paul so Paul needs to be examined how does Paul show forth this kind of reality how is he the man of incarnation is he just talking out of his hat is it just a play on words Christ in me the hope of glory for me to live is Christ or is it the most awesome statement of his

apostolic life and if it is that how did he attain it and if it was available for his attainment is it available also for ours Paul is the continuation as it were of Christ Christ is incarnated in Paul so what we have in the epistles and Paul's apostolic role to the gentile church the book of Romans Ephesians all of the great statements is all that Christ himself would have spoken and performed but is now given over to another in whom Christ is living and having his being as the incarnate God in Paul now is that just a freaky thing like once and for all available only to a foundational apostle or is it a mode of being and a distinctive and foundational way of life that God intends for all the church that is to be called apostolic and our failure to appropriate that deity and that life and

live from it is to the degree to which we ourselves are not apostolic can we say with equal faith and confidence for me to live is Christ in him I live and move and have my being and if we can't say it why can't we say it what hinders us from the same appropriation of the deity of Christ that Paul was able to obtain and here is deity that has passed in his human life in the earth through suffering, crucifixion, death burial, resurrection and ascension and that life now that has passed through all of that reality is poured out from the throne of heaven and becomes the baptism in the Holy Spirit that the church experiences at Pentecost so that when we see Peter after Pentecost is a very different Peter than before in fact it would be very invaluable to compare a post Pentecost Peter with

Paul if they both have now the life of the risen and ascended son how is it that they don't sound the same how are they uniquely different and yet both are empowered and enabled by the same life follow me and isn't that a blessing should the life be so uniform that everyone who lives by that life is punched off the same assembly line they're little Jesuses, little resurrected Jesuses who sound and look and act the same or does God invest himself in the uniqueness of their humanity and the expression through the human filter is uniquely different for each one Peter is uniquely different than Paul and yet I would not give up first and second Peter because what is spoken there is so unbelievably precious that Paul never quite touches those things that the Holy Spirit reserves for Peter to

express and the uniqueness that is Peter so this is not just interesting it's important for us because what then is God waiting for in the uniqueness of our vessels that can only be expressed through us who formed us in our mothers wombs and birthed us in point of time in the history of redemption to bring a singular expression that is fitted and unique only to us that can only be operated by and enabled by the same life by which Paul and Peter themselves served God as apostles got that? and to what degree are we living beneath that? what a shame, what a scandal that we would think to continue the apostolic inheritance or bring it to its consummation on a basis other than that by which it began the incarnate life of

God and the apostles and the apostolic church and we're continuing what?

out of our own humanity? well-meaning and intelligent and gifted but less and other than incarnation why is that? is the life not as available to us as it was to them? why then can we not say the same? for me to live as Christ why are we living out of our humanity? when there's another source available with the resurrection with the ascension that is evidently lacking in the church today and it shows that well-meaning intention and the best sincerity is a miserable what's the word? failure and scandal next to the apostolic standard that was the church at the first is it that the church needed that at the first because of the hostility against the new faith and we are in another time when that kind of power and enablement and authority is not as necessary or would you say it's equally as

necessary in every generation and especially at the end to conclude the age it must require the same kinds of enablement by which it began because the church is called to glory unto him be glory in the church through Christ Jesus catch that world without end throughout all ages that's the end of Ephesians chapter 3 I believe unto him be glory in the church by or through Christ Jesus the resurrected and ascended one world without end throughout all ages so why have we failed to appropriate the remarkable enablement of the life of God that incarnation the reality, the principle, the mystery can be continued in our flesh what will it require are we willing to vacate are we willing to lay aside are we willing to be emptied getting the picture here he's the pattern son, he emptied himself are

we willing to empty ourselves not of deity but of our virtue, of our humanity of our talent, of our gifts or are we insistent that we're going to succeed on that basis no emptying, no filling kenosis is emptying I think it's pleurosis is filling and maybe that's the problem right there we're unwilling to be emptied our egos require that we succeed on the basis of our own natural life and ability we're unwilling to forsake Jesus was willing we're unwilling and the church therefore is operating humanly and religiously so in what way is it possible to us to perpetuate or fulfill the mystery of incarnation and how important is it that we should is this just an option for those who have this desire or what is at stake here if we do not enter into this realm of incarnation and it's mystery and

it's expression what is lost how critical is this appropriation is it just for those individuals who have the faith and desire for it who have been shown the futility of their own best efforts or is this God's normative intention for all the church that is the church why have we fallen short of it how are we to be encouraged to it it's going to take sons of the resurrection to demonstrate before the church the reality and call the church to the reality by their own example and by the power of what they speak out of that life where are these sons so is Paul just what's the word probably vainly boasting when he says for me to live as Christ is that exaggerated is that vain is he talking out of his hat or is he speaking the most authentic statement of truth about his uniqueness as an

apostolic man can he be an apostle outside of that reality can anyone and what is the threat to the church today is men presuming to be apostles and prophets outside of that reality they are human, all too human clever, but they lack the distinctive authority which is God and so to compare Peter with Paul eventuated by the same newness of life and yet radically different and since the day of Pentecost because what happened at Pentecost what was it that came down according to the promise to the fathers from the throne of heaven some innocuous and abstract energy called the spirit or the ruach hakodesh the spirit of holiness or the spirit of a lord which is the sum and essence of the life of the lord and of God came into men as flame flames of fire upon their heads and they spoke instantly

and strangely in languages that they had not learned and then we see almost in the next chapters a remarkable change in these men Peter and John who were vying and competitive and rivaling one another are now together at gate beautiful and the man who was born lame fixing his eyes on them what did he see in them this is a cogent phrase that Peter recognized that he had faith to believe and say silver and gold have we none not speaking have we none but that which we have we give unto you that there is a new kind of union there is a new kind of fraternity a new kind of heavenly fellowship by men who had previously been rivals and in competition with one another vying for a foremost place with the lord who have now become a we in fact the message at Pentecost itself these men are not drunk

as you suppose seeing it's only the ninth hour by Peter it says Peter rising with the eleven opened his mouth and said these men are not drunk as you suppose and when they heard that message what was it three thousand were swept into the kingdom with one speaking is this already the greater works than I have done you will do but is the greatness of that work critically connected to the fact that Peter rose with the eleven what does that mean did they all stand up at the same time were they all speaking at the same time it would have been a jangle of words one man was the mouthpiece but the unity and agreement of men who had been bonded by receiving the same principle of life was now expressed in a message out of that life with such power that those who came out of curiosity thinking that

these men were drunk are swept into the kingdom of God the church has it's inception by that message and that power but it came out of a unity silver and gold have we none but that which we do have we take up your bed and walk and if this is the statement of life that has come down from heaven and is received by those who are in the upper room and brings a radical change in such expression of power and authority where is it today not only where is it today where is it in Pentecostal churches where is it in the charismatic movement where is it in those places that purport to have received the same gift and the same life has it changed we have received something other than what they received at Pentecost or have we received so it raises a remarkable question why don't we see the same result

the same outworking the same authority the same power the same sacrificial lifestyle the same fraternal communal lifestyle no man thought that the thing which he had was his own they gave liberally those that had houses and lands sold them and laid the proceeds at the feet of the apostles who made distribution there was not one among them that had want a kingdom had come a new economy a mode of living and being that was radically different from what we know Jews to be and to desire they were changed by one infusion that had economic expression of a radical kind that has not again been emulated except in small places in the history of the church and it had to do with the infusion of a life if we don't raise those questions we will continue to remain in the lamentable condition that we

presently are either we need a fresh baptism of that spirit and be willing for the outworking of it where we don't hold things as our own but have all things common or something needs to be explained all of these questions are related to the issue of incarnation I don't believe we are going to come to the appropriation except that we raise these questions have you the faith to believe for it the divine life in you deity in you and expressing himself through your humanity in your accent in your particular human form that's what glorifies God it's not that there should echo from us thus sayeth the Lord we all sound like an echo chamber but through you your particular accent your personality the way that you were fashioned and formed but the life and the content is not out from you it's out

from God can you see that as a principle of life in which you can live continually it would not be remarkable and that is this the rest that God has promised the people of God and is this the basis out of which the

great last days works will take place not out of our vexation and striving but out of our rest and confidence of Christ in us the hope of glory who can answer to any situation because it is the wisdom of God the righteousness of God can we trust for that and believe for that can we believe it out of our own mouths and in fact if we can't who is it that's going to address the dry bones of Israel in Ezekiel 37 that unless they hear such a word not from God but from the son of man they'll remain in their death that the whole mystery of the consummation of the age and Israel's

resurrection waits on a word that will not come to it directly from God but only something called the son of man not an individual but a corporate expression brought to a place that can be commanded to speak to those bones and not just out of an obligatory speaking but a willing speaking a desire to see those bones raised and a great nation emerge despite the fact that they don't deserve that consideration and that everyone desires that they be left to die leave them in what they deserve by their own apostasy so you have to be an uncommon man to be commanded to address those bones and to see them come to life because once they do you have a new competitor now God has a restored resurrected nation that will be the object of his attention and his love and where do you come off you may be

pouting like the older brother who is not happy to see the prodigal son return because he wanted to bask in the exclusive attention of his father don't think I'm just touching some small thing here this is a greater issue than you know and unless the church rises above that issue it will not address those bones it will not desire to see them raised and it will shut its mouth and be obstinate as in fact many of us are now something has got to happen in our humanity by which we welcome the return of the profligate and prodigal brother who does not deserve to be raised even though we know that we will have a new competitor for the attention and love of God but our confidence is so great in his love and its infinite supply that we're not at all threatened that it will diminish anything of the

father's affection for us and therefore we can well afford to see this son returned because the issue of the son's return is in fact the glory of God the father because the issue is the issue of Israel's restoration, the consummation of the age, the coming of the kingdom reserved exclusively for them, the Davidic kingdom though it pertains to much more than to the nation, it's universal but it has its issue with them as a raised nation but raised by whom? by a people who will speak for God as God in his authority try it sometime and see if you can get away with it if you're not in that place of incarnation, you'll fall as flat as the proverbial pancake because whoever that son of man will be in the last days, he'll not be made of any better or different or other stuff than what is in this

room right now how do we come to that appropriation and that reality is the issue of Israel's redemption and the glorification of God forever, that's why Paul ends in Romans 11, all the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God who has been his counselor for of him and through him and to him are all things to whom be glory forever that's remarkable that the glory of God forever rests not on the unique and expression of God as God directly, but God as God through flesh through man exactly the same principle by which he was glorified in the son to the establishment of the church is exactly the same principle by which his glory is consummated through the church Christ in us, the deity in man and through man is the remarkable mystery that has its consummation at the end

of the age with Israel because if it's only just our well meaning intention and we want to agree with God yes Israel should be raised and we'll speak a word it'll go right to the ground with a thud no authority, no resurrection power, just a religious human word that is void it has got to be as much and equal to as God's own speaking God's own speaking but not directly from God, but through you so we had better lay hold of

this incarnation and I'll tell you what it's not going to come to us in a moment when it's called for, if we have not been consistently growing into this reality long before we'll not find it at the last moment if we have not found it before and consistently have walked in it that's why these questions are so imperative that this has got to be frequent and consistent

and requires faith to believe for it staggering we can believe for Jesus' expression and maybe one or two modern time spokesmen but can we believe for ourselves through our humanity son of man can these bones live? it's like the Lord rubbing the humanity the condition of the humanity into the prophet himself, you son of man you sweating palpitating thing given to indecisive apprehensions and doubts and all can these bones live? this will stagger you, this is beyond even your faith to believe and yet if it doesn't come through the son of man it does not come God insists that the final mystery be the fulfillment through the mystery of incarnation or it will not be fulfilled at all the nations are opposed to God today and want to be autonomous that's why Psalm 2 says, why do the heathen

rage? what are the heathen? the Goyim the Gentiles, the nations and take thought against the Lord and against his anointed to break their bands asunder they don't want to obey God they want to crucify him and remove his rule so we're yet waiting for that consummation and of course if they're going to be submitted to the rule of God at the end of the age millennially and eternally they'll have to bow and acknowledge the people whom he has raised up who are the locus of that rule, namely Zion and of course what is more alien to the Gentile heart than that they should bow and acknowledge Shem that they should come into that tent and be required to come to that Zion in the feast of tabernacles and yet God says if you'll not come you'll suffer a curse I'll be my reign why does he even have to

make the threat? because the inveterate hostility of the nations to God and to his chosen people remains even after his coming in fact a thousand years later when Satan is unchained, what does he do? overnight he raises up a rebellion against God and against his people and comes against Israel to destroy it showing that there's yet a latent disposition among men in the nations even after a thousand years of godly rule to be quickly stirred into a revolution a rebellion against God through Satan who is loose for a moment and then God brings his final devastation of judgment on the mountains of Israel so this is a remarkable climax of the ages when all kingdoms will be submitted unto him and then he will turn over to the father all of the kingdoms of the world that are now submitted and

disposed to the most high that God might be all in all this is a great saga, this is the cosmic overview of the whole thing in which the church has its life, its purpose and its meaning if we don't see this why bother about incarnation the incarnation is the great mystery of supply that we would fulfill our destiny in this great cosmic design of God in fact that he will not come until this gospel of the kingdom is proclaimed to all nations and until the fullness of the gentiles become in the deliverer will not come out of Zion there's a function for us that has to do with the consummation that waits upon us like Psalm 102, the set time to favor Zion, when, when my servants have compassion on the stones and pity upon her dust the church is the critical factor in the fulfillment of God's

whole great redemptive design for creation and for the nations, but a church of what kind, a church in what power, a church in what authority, a church in what humility, that will empty itself, that he might be all in all and in so doing the father is honoring his son the son initiated that mystery for the first time in history out of his own humanity and will again glorify the father by being the deity in us by which the age is concluded Christ in us is deity fulfilling himself again through the human form, through man because it takes it takes a temple for the glory of God to be revealed the glory of God is never manifest in open space, it always

required a building, a temple a confinement, a body and so also at the end, and we are that thing not only individually but corporately so

however individually virtuoso we might be in the faith if we are not united and corporate as the Godhead itself the mystery will not be revealed it's a corporate expression of incarnation that brings the glory, it's the son of man as a corporate entity not a stray isolated individual who happens to be unique so the mystery of corporateness is at the heart of the whole fulfillment, but can you attain to that except by the life of God is this a little social experiment let's play camp in the woods let's play community we played other games, now we'll play this game, well if it's only a game and a social experiment it's a disaster and it's doomed this is a holy enterprise and it requires divine enablement, even to bear one another, let alone to love one another and grow up together with each

other in the unfolding of the uniqueness of God's intention for every expression they had to have a Pentecost before they could believe that what they had was not their own that no man thought that what he had was his own, they had all things common something happened to them in their brain box, in their categories in this view of how life should be lived that was altogether radical and transforming that's what happens when the life of God comes in because the life is not just an energy it's a character it's a personality it has its own disposition and wisdom like the Godhead, three persons yet one not in competition deferring one to another in a remarkable way that God wants to see exemplified in the earth through the church you can't do that humanly or religiously as a social experiment

it fails again and again God's son pre-incarnate but also incarnate in the days of his flesh how was he the son and his own testimony is remarkable I do nothing of myself the words that I speak are not my words but the words which my father has given me he would not initiate a single thing out of himself and such a dedication to the father as the source of his life his being, his ministry, his wisdom all so he's the pattern of what sonship is in total dependency upon the father messiah, lord king, coming king all out of his obedience as a son in his humanity and yet it says that he wept and cried out in Hebrews and that the father heard his cries that Jesus would have to cry that he would have to suffer and learn obedience by the things which he suffered was that required for his humanity

and I'm going to be reading you what I think is the most radical and creative view of incarnation that I have ever been privileged to consider that might be the lord's last word on how we ought to perceive this mystery and fulfill it in the way that Jesus himself did by growing into through obedience that which he already was it sounds like a remarkable paradox religiosity presumption of a seemingly acceptable kind can be as great an obstruction to the receiving and the living out of this life as just carnal indifference maybe even more potent and more powerful because it's religious and we have a vested interest in succeeding on that basis so false piety has to be identified and dealt with, maybe this is part of that emptying because tradition familiarity the way in which we have been

brought up denominationally, whatever it is is the hardest thing to forsake but if Jesus was able to forsake and empty himself of his deity which he shared with the father since time immemorial, he always was with the father before creation and in fact commenced creation and was able to empty himself what then should we not be able to do by a comfortable grace we're still on the wilderness side too many of us and we cannot get from there to the other except on dry ground that comes by his power so long as he stands in that place and this is holding the ark until all Israel passes through I've seen it too often, it's painful the death that is in the church today, and they don't even seem to be aware of it they go on in their repetitive ways and people are sitting like lumps that are

unmoved and untouched the kids are cracking gum up in the balcony and poking one another and waiting for the dreary thing to be over the whole thing is mechanical and lifeless, that one hour in the week when reality should have its opportunity ironically what is unreal is what permeates that hour in most churches, in the land and perhaps in the world, and I heard that cry, oh my God I know it, I've seen it, it's stultifying, it's deadly and the people seem to sit there and do their duty and they pass through the, then they can go home again, turn on the TV set, go to the golf course, but the condition of the church especially in view of the climax of the ages, the whole cosmic call how do we go from where we presently are to that is our concern, and that's why we need the kind of prospect

that might be offered in a little place like this in nowhere-ville over things that would not ordinarily be brought to our consideration like incarnation so in, wherever else in the world something like this is being offered the Lord will meet the need, he will answer, he will succeed, he has already succeeded he will work out the victory obtained at the cross, he will be eternally glorified and in fact our confidence and our hope is not something that we can humanly sustain but it itself requires the supernaturalness of God in us even to hope for this realization in the face of everything that is otherwise depressing and evidently hopeless he is our hope, he is even our hope, see how much we need God as God in our humanity it's not just by taking a deep breath and hoping against hope, he

is that hope or else we would be defeated before we begin the issues are so overwhelming the condition is so abysmal and yet he will succeed as close as we are to the end of the age, he'll do a quick work and cut it short in righteousness he's able and if he can't do it with us where else shall we hope so when I've been in places like Sicily and I'm looking into the faces of women who I know they're thinking about their pots and pans and the pasta that's cooking and when is this guy going to end or it's going to boil over and I'm bringing a message on the principalities and powers of the air I'm ready to throw in the towels and Lord this is hopeless, let the floor open and swallow me and then I say if God cannot succeed now with you Italians you Sicilians is more occupied with the issue

of your pasta than the glory of God forever, then where then shall we hope for any success if he'll not succeed with you, where will he succeed and that's the glory of God the humility of God, the foolishness of God, choosing the weak thing and out of the mouths of babes and sucklings his wisdom is perfected because he's in a contest with another moral order that thinks itself superior and their values their wisdom predicated on power prestige, rivalry competition, force threat, seduction the things that move the world so God has got to defeat them on the basis of his own wisdom humility, weakness foolishness but the foolishness of God is greater than the wisdom of men he's got to triumph in that basis and he will, that's why we're chosen we are the most foolish and weak and unpromising

prospects for the consummation of the age that can be imagined and yet he will triumph in it, so we need to thank him, Lord what a calling what a calling Lord my God, what faith you have and we're commended to have the faith of the son of God you can believe for your triumph with us, and you're putting all your eggs in that pitiful one basket with women who are concerned about their pasta and they're going to know about their principalities and powers and be instrumental in their defeat, Lord who is sufficient for these things Paul had to cry that out and the answer is the sufficiency that he had in Christ who has made unto us wisdom sanctification, redemption and power or else we are without hope and Lord, we know these things technically, we know these things positionally, but we don't

know them actually, we have not believed for these realities through us, and we've been coasting and getting by on our scant humanity because we have not yet been tested so Lord if we have asked for mercy

and grace in the days that have preceded this first day of the last week, we're asking it now God forbid Lord that I would humanly seek to bring forth the mystery of incarnation when it takes the incarnation to speak of the incarnation it takes God to speak of God and so Lord we empty ourselves of presumption of pride, of human confidence and ask that you would have the greater opportunity to manifest your life through us teachers as students together Lord, to come into some appropriation of this great mystery, that we would take it with us, it will be in us my God and thereafter so we

bless you Lord oh Lord, mercy mercy, mercy Lord in this so great thing we pray thank you for the privilege of it Lord, in which only you can succeed, to the eternal praise of your glory, as we ask it in Yeshua's holy name and God's people said Amen

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